

¶ Tho wesshen they, and sette hem down & etc;
And after noon ful slely Pandarus
Gan drawe him to the window next the strete,
And seyde: Nece, who hath arayed thus
The yonder hous, that stant aforayn us?
¶ Which hous? quod she, and gan for to biholde,
And knew it wel, and whos it was him tolde,

And fillen forth in speche of thinges smale,
And seten in the window bothe tweye.
¶ Whan Pandarus saw tyme unto his tale,
And saw wel that hir folk were alle awaye:
Now, nece myn, tel on, quod he, I seye,
How lyketh yow the lettre that ye woot?
Can he theron? for, by my trouthe, I noot.

¶ Therwith al rosy hewed tho wex she,
And gan to humme, and seyde: So I trowe.
¶ Aquyte him wel, for Goddes love, quod he;
Myself to medes wol the lettre sowe,
And held his bondes up, and sat on knowe,
Now, goode nece, be it never so lyte,
Yif me the labour, it to sowe and plyte.

¶ Ye, for I can so wryte, quod she tho;
And eek I noot what I sholde to him seye.
¶ Nay, nece, quod Pandare, sey not so;
Yet at the leste thanketh him, I preye,
Of his good wil, and doth him not to deye.
Now for the love of me, my nece dere,
Refuseth not at this tyme my preyere.

¶ Depar dieux, quod she, God leve al be wel!
God helpe me so, this is the firste lettre
That ever I wroot, ye, al or any del.
¶ And into a closet, for to avyse hir bettre,
She wente allone, and gan hir herte unfettre
Out of disdaynes prison but a lyte;
And sette hir down, and gan a lettre wryte,

Of which to telle in short is myn entente
The effect, as fer as I can understonde:
She thonked him of al that he wel mente
Towardes hir, but holden him in honde
She nolde nought, ne make hirselven bonde
In love, but as his suster, him to plesse,
She wolde fayn, to doon his herte an esse.

She shette it, and to Pandarus gan goon,
There as he sat and lokend into strete,
And down she sette hir by him on a stoon
Of jaspere, upon a quissishin gold ybete,
And seyde: As wisly helpe me God the grete,
I never dide a thing with more payne
Than wryte this, to which ye me constreyne;

¶ And took it him: he thonked hir and seyde:
God woot, of thing ful ofte looth bigonne
Cometh ende good; and nece myn, Criseyde,
That ye to him of hard now ben ywonne
Oughte he be glad, by God and yonder sonne!
For why men seyth: Impressiounes lighte
ful lightly been ay redy to the flighte.

But ye han pleyed tyraunt neigh to longe,
And hard was it your herte for to grave;
Now stint, that ye no longer on it honge,
Al wolde ye the forme of daunger save.
But hasteth yow to doon him joye have;
For trusteth wel, to longe ydoon hardnesse
Causeth despyt ful often, for distresse.

¶ And right as they declamed this matere,
Lo, Troilus, right at the stretes ende,
Com ryding with his tenthe some yfere,
Al softly, and thiderward gan bende
Theras they sete, as was his way to wende
To paleys ward; and Pandare him aspyde,
And seyde: Nece, ysee who cometh here ryde!

O flee not in, he seeth us, I suppose;
Lest he may thinke that ye him eschewe.
¶ Nay, nay, quod she, and wex as reed as rose,
With that he gan hir humbly to saluwe,
With dreedful chere, and ofte his hewes mure;
And up his look debonairly he caste,
And bekked on Pandare, and forth he paste.

God woot if he sat on his hors aright,
Or goodly was beseyn, that ilke day!
God woot wher he was lyk a manly knight!
¶ What sholde I drecche, or telle of his aray?
Criseyde, which that alle these thinges say,
To telle in short, hir lyked al yfere,
His persone, his aray, his look, his chere,

His goodly manere and his gentillesse,
So wel, that never, sith that she was born,
Ne hadde she swich routhe of his distresse;
And howso she hath hard ben herbiforn,
To God hope I, she hath now caught a thorn.
She shal not pulle it out this nexte wyke;
God sende mo swich thornes on to pyke!

Pandare, which that stood hir faste by,
Felte iren hoot, and he bigan to smyte,
And seyde: Nece, I pray yow hertely,
Tel me that I shal axen yow a lyte.
¶ A womman, that were of his deeth to wyte,
Withouthen his gilt, but for hir lakked routhe,
Were it wel doon? ¶ Quod she: Nay, by my trouthe!

¶ God helpe me so, quod he, ye sey me sooth,
Ye felen wel yourself that I not lye;
Lo, yond he rit! ¶ Quod she: Ye, so he dooth.
¶ Wel, quod Pandare, as I have told yow thrye,
Lat be your nyce shame and your folye,
And speke with him in esing of his herte;
Lat nyce tee not do yow bothe smerte.

¶ But theron was to heaven and to done;
Considered al thing, it may not be;
And why, for shame; and it were eek to sone
To graunten him so greet a libertee.
For playnly hir entente, as seyde she,
Was for to love him unwist, if she mighte,
And guerdon him with nothing but with sighte.

But Pandarus thoughte: It shal not be so,
If that I may; this nyce opinioun
Shal not be holden fully yeres two.
¶ What sholde I make of this a long sermoun?
He moste assente on that conclusioun
As for the tyme; and whan that it was eve,
As al was wel, he roos and took his leve.

And on his way ful faste homward he spedde,
And right for joye he felte his herte daunce;
And Troilus he fond alone abedde,
That lay as dooth these loveres, in a traunce,
Bitwixen hope and derk desesperaunce.
But Pandarus, right at his incominge,
He song, as who seyth: Lo! sumwhat I bringe.

And seyde: Who is in his bed so sone
Yburied thus? ¶ It am I, freend, quod he.
¶ Who, Troilus? nay helpe me so the mone,
Quod Pandarus, thou shalt aryse and see
A charme that was sent right now to thee,
The which can helen thee of thyn accessse,
If thou do forthwith al thy businesse.

¶ Ye, through the might of God! quod Troilus.
¶ And Pandarus gan him the lettre take,
And seyde: Pardee, God hath holpen us;
Have here a light, and loke on al this blake.
¶ But ofte gan the herte glade and quake
Of Troilus, whyl that he gan it rede,
So as the wordes yave him hope or drede.

But fynally, he took al for the beste
That she him wroot, for sumwhat he biheld
On which, him thoughte, he mighte his herte reste,
Al covered she the wordes under sheld.
Thus to the more worthy part he held,
That, what for hope and Pandarus biheste,
His grete wo foryede he at the leste.

But as we may alday ourselven see,
Through more wode or col, the more fyr;
Right so encrees of hope, of what it be,
Therwith ful ofte encreseth eek desyr;
Or, as an ook cometh of a litel spyr,
So through this lettre, which that she him sente,
Encresen gan desyr, of which he brente.

¶ Wherefore I seye alwey, that day and night
This Troilus gan to desiren more
Than he dide erst, thurgh hope, & dide his might
To pressen on, as by Pandarus lore,
And wryten to hir of his sorwes sore
fro day to day; he leet it not refreyde,
That by Pandare he wroot somwhat or seyde;

And dide also his othere observaunces
That to a lover longeth in this cas;
And, after that these dees turned on chaunces,
So was he outhur glad or seyde Allas!
And held after his gastes ay his pas;
And aftir swiche answeres as he hadde,
So were his dayes sory outhur gladde.

But to Pandare alwey was his recours,
And pitously gan ay til him to pleyne,
And him bisoughte of rede and som socours;
And Pandarus, that sey his wode payne,
Wex wel neigh deed for routhe, sooth to seyne,
And bisily with al his herte caste
Som of his wo to sleen, and that as faste;

And seyde: Lord, and freend, and brother dere,
God woot that thy disese dooth me wo.
But woltow stinten al this woful chere,
And, by my trouthe, or it be dayes two,
But God toforn, yet shal I shape it so,
That thou shalt come into a certayn place,
Theras thou mayst thyself hir preye of grace.

And certainly, I noot if thou it wost,
But tho that been expert in love it seye,
It is oon of the thinges that furthereth most,
A man to have a leysur for to preye,
And siker place his wo for to biwreie;
for in good herte it moot som routhe impresse,
To here and see the gittles in distresse.

¶ Paraunter thenkestow: though it be so
That kinde wolde doon hir to beginne
To han a maner routhe upon my wo,
Seyth Daunger: Nay, thou shalt me never winne;
So reuleth hir hir hertes goost withinne,
That, though she bende, yet she stant on rote;
¶ What in effect is this unto my bote?

¶ Thenk hereayeins, whan that the sturdy ook,
On which men hakketh ofte, for the nones,
Receyved hath the happy falling strook,
The grete swiegh doth it come al at ones,
As doon these rokkes or these milne stones,
for swifter cours cometh thing that is of wighte,
¶ Whan it descendeth, than don thinges lighte.

And reed that boweth down for every blast,
ful lightly, cesse wind, it wol aryse;
But so nil not an ook whan it is cast;
It nedeth me nought thee longe to forbyse.
Men shal rejoysen of a greet emprise
Acheved wel, and stant withouten doute,
¶ Al han men been the lenger therabout.

But, Troilus, yet tel me, if thee lest,
A thing now which that I shal axen thee;
¶ Which is thy brother that thou lovest best
As in thy verray hertes privetee?
¶ Ywis, my brother Deiphebus, quod he.
¶ Now, quod Pandare, er houres twyes twelve,
he shal thee ese, unwist of it himselve.

Now lat me allone, and werken as I may,
Quod he; and to Deiphebus wente he tho
¶ Which hadde his lord and grete freend ben ay;
Save Troilus, no man he lovede so.
To telle in short, withouten wordes mo,
Quod Pandarus: I pray yow that ye be
freend to a cause which that toucheth me.